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ABSTRACT

Research techniques for measuring political learning during a campaign are examined. Micro-analytic techniques involve intensive analysis of individuals. Large amounts of data on the psychological and sociological settings of subjects are gathered, along with information on opinions toward past and emerging political situations. Macro-analytic techniques sample large sections of the general population and usually take the form of national or subnational opinion polls. Prior to the measurement of any changing attitudes, it is necessary to first establish a knowledge base of currently held opinions and attitudes. The advantage of macro-techniques is that they produce a wide range of standardizable data about voting behavior, political opinions, and attitudes towards the system. The disadvantage is that they record stages in the change process, but are incapable of analyzing the process. The major deterrent to micro-analytic work is that such studies cannot be readily generalized to a national population. However, samples drawn for micro-analytic research are representative of behavioral types and, therefore, offer superior techniques for studying complex learning processes. (Author/DE)

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POLITICAL LEARNING DURING A CAMPAIGN:

MICRO- AND MACRO-ANALYTIC RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

by

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Political Learning During a Campaign:
Micro- and Macro-Analytic Research Techniques

Politicians, as well as students of politics, have been greatly interested in probing the whys and wherefores of voting because citizens' views count at election time, in the literal as well as the figurative sense. Why does the individual voter vote the way he does? Why does he shift among parties, split his ticket, omit choices, or fail to vote entirely? How does the campaign, as an intervening variable between initial predisposition and final vote, shape political thoughts and affect voting?[1]

This paper will examine various types of research techniques which are presently in use to find answers to these intriguing questions. For purposes of analysis, these techniques will be presented as two major groupings: micro-analytic and macro-analytic. Micro-analytic techniques involve intensive analyses of individuals. Large amounts of data on the psychological and sociological setting of subjects are gathered, along with information on opinions towards past and emerging political situations. For example, Robert Lane, in a micro-analytic study of the political ideologies of 15 working class men used 20 different psychological scales to test liberalism-conservatism, political participation, citizen-duty, political efficacy, authoritarianism, sex tensions, faith-in-people, dominance, anomy, anxiety, ego strength, moral tensions, as well as tests of factual knowledge, accounts of life experiences, and open-ended questions about the respondent's images of politicians, political groups, public policies, and political ideologies.[2] In micro-analytic studies, the investigator does not restrict himself to data about the respondents' behavior and beliefs. He also tries to learn why each respondent reacts to stimuli in a particular manner, and what the stimuli are which come to the respondent's attention from the political environment in which he lives. An effort is made to assess the reciprocal relations among various environmental factors, and the impact they have on the

respondent's thoughts and feelings.[3]

Because of high expense of time and money per respondent in micro-analytic studies, they are generally performed on comparatively small samples of people. They usually take place in the field to capture the influence of natural settings. However, they can also be carried on wholly or partly in laboratory settings, using various types of experimental designs. Besides intensive interviews, psychological testing, and study of sociological settings, micro-analytic designs frequently include extended observations of respondents' behavior, including filming, administration of galvanic skin tests, and other tests of emotional tensions. Use of Q-samples and semantic differential instruments for the assessment of conceptual structures is also common.

Macro-analytic techniques are much grosser and more superficial. Compared to micro-analytic techniques, they pay scant attention to the individual's psychological make-up, his specific social setting, and the actual substance of stimuli that reach him. Because of the concern that small samples may be unrepresentative of the population in general, macro-analytic research ordinarily employs much larger samples. If the investigator wishes to generalize his sample to the general U.S. population-- normally considered to be the ideal design -- he will collect data on roughly 1500 to 3000 carefully selected persons. In regional or city-wide samples, about a third of that number are often deemed sufficient. The large number of individuals to be tested requires that costs per subject be kept low. This means that the data gathered from each individual are sparser than those explored in micro-analytic research. They are also less well focussed on a particular research concern, such as political learning, because the data base must serve a diverse research community with varied interests. For the most part, data are collected which can fit into structured responses, which can be standardized easily, and which fit readily

into a predetermined coding scheme. All this must be done at the expense of richness, depth and flexibility to adjust measurement instruments to the requirements of particular situations.

The major research techniques through which macro-analytic studies operate are personal or telephone interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Most macro-analytic studies are in the form of regular census operations, public opinion polls on national and subnational levels, or more complex national surveys involving a variety of personality scales and information questions, generally suitable for 60 to 90 minute interviews. The interviews may involve a one-time contact with respondents, two-stage before-and-after panels, or multiple-stage panel designs. Examples of the more complex surveys are the biannual election surveys done by the Institute for Political Studies at the University of Michigan, earlier, well-publicized studies like those of populations in Erie County, Pennsylvania, and in Elmira, New York,[4] and the multi-panel study of a 1964 English election.[5] Examples also include large-scale sample surveys done in connection with the four television debates between candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon in 1960,[6] and studies of single facets of campaign learning, such as development of candidate images, or campaign activities, or mass media use.[7]

To assess the contributions which various research techniques can make to answering questions about political behavior we need to know what specific questions must be answered. Appraisal of the techniques suitable for study of political learning during a campaign therefore requires first a definition of "political learning" and then a statement of the kinds of questions which shed light on the learning process, its outcomes, and its relation to the campaign and to voting.

Political learning, simply defined, means increasing one's political knowledge by internalizing information. The focus in this paper is on learning during a definite time span -- a political campaign. Even more restrictively, we want to know the best approaches to studying what campaign information a person internalizes and how it affects or fails to affect his political perceptions, feelings, and voting decision. This fairly simple quest immediately opens a Pandora's Box of problems which must be solved to permit study of the learning process.

In the first place, if political learning means an increase in knowledge, one must establish a base-line for measurement. How does one find out what the individual knows prior to the campaign? The second question springs from the problem of defining what is meant by "internalizing information." Does remembering require that one recall the original stimulus, or is it enough to remember the attitude or mood produced by the stimulus?

A third, somewhat easier problem is the specification of what constitutes a campaign. Using the presidential campaign as an example, does the 1976 "campaign" begin in 1974 when the first aspirants for the office announce their intention to run for it, or even before that when activities are publicized which may make a candidate presidential timber? Or does it begin with the presidential primaries, and the activities leading up to these primaries? Or should it be dated from the beginning or ending of the party conventions when the candidates are nominated? Or is the fairly common practice of studying the campaign during its final weeks the most defensible? Last, but not least in importance or difficulty, how does one discover what internalized new information affects the citizen's conception of the campaign, of politics in general, and possibly his voting decision in the current election?

I will use the 1972 and 1974 election surveys by the Michigan Survey Research Center to illustrate how macro-analytic techniques answer questions about campaign learning. I selected the Michigan surveys because they constitute one of the most widely-respected, widely-used efforts, based on many years of experience by a group of outstanding scholars. Hence they probably are as fine an example of good macro-analytic designs and techniques as can be produced by social scientists at the present time.

For the micro-analytic techniques, I shall use my own research as an example. I do this without any immodest claims that mine is the best available. But aside from the work of Robert Lane[8] and a number of political leaders and political elite studies[9], micro-analytic studies of political behavior are rare. There have been no multi-faceted micro-analytic analyses of political learning in general during a campaign, based on intensive study of a small sample of respondents over a period of time extending well before the start and beyond the finish of the campaign. My own approach incorporates a variety of micro-analytic techniques developed by other investigators in related, more limited projects. But aside from Lane's work, there is no other fairly comparable model.

Establishing the Knowledge Base

In 1972, the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan conducted its election research in split pre-election and post-election waves. The first half of the pre-election wave was interviewed from early September to early October; dates for the second half ran from early October to election day. Each half constituted a national cross-section sample so that its users would be able to "study changes in voting intentions and shifts in attitudes towards major issues" and to learn "how the candidates, parties and issues affect the current political behavior of the respondent."[10] Post-election samples were interviewed from early November to early December and from early January to early February, 1973.

In 1974, only a post-election sample was tapped.

This means that there is no pre-election base-line from which to measure campaign learning for the 1974 study. The 1972 data probably are not a good base line because the two-year span between elections is far longer than the period normally considered a "presidential campaign." Within the 1972 survey, one can use the pre-election data as a baseline and compare them to the post-election data. However, for much of the sample this is not satisfactory because post-election interviews occurred several weeks to several months after the election. Respondents had therefore experienced post-campaign learning which tended to contaminate the measurement of campaign learning.

One other possibility exists for establishing a knowledge baseline within the 1972 survey: a comparison between the first and second pre-election samples, using the first sample as baseline. On the assumption that the two samples are similar, one can attribute knowledge differences between the first and second waves of respondents to learning from the campaign. Since interviews in each wave were spread out over an entire month, one might be able to compare responses of early interviewees with those of later ones. One could then try to relate differences in responses to political events or campaign information which had transpired between the dates selected for comparison. This quasipanel technique has been used occasionally in the past,[11] when segments of samples, interviewed at various time intervals, were comparable. However, comparisons of samples which involve different individuals have a number of serious drawbacks for studying learning. Most seriously, one cannot assess learning on an individual basis; one can only note changes in group views. This makes it impossible to judge which attitudes at Time One are related to attitudes existing at Time Two. It also becomes impossible to assess the particular stimuli which cause an individual to change or remain constant between the two testing dates.

The drawbacks which have been outlined can be overcome by the simple

device of multiple waves of interviews for the same respondents during the pre-election period. For instance, the 1944 Erie County study involved several pre-election waves. Several 1972 election studies done in single cities also employ multiple pre-election waves.[12] However, even these studies do not solve the problem of providing a control group, not exposed to the campaign at all, to check whether learning attributed to the campaign might have come from other sources. The costs of multiple interviews with large samples and interviewee resistance to multiple demands on their time are other serious problems which have discouraged the use of multiple panels. Hence the difficulties which arise in establishing knowledge base lines in macro-analyses are formidable.

In micro-analyses, multiple interviews with the same respondents pose comparatively few problems beyond securing respondents' cooperation. In fact, multiple interview procedures are a regular part of micro-analytic designs, because repeated contacts, at relatively brief intervals, are deemed essential to measure short-time learning and various stages in the long-term learning process. The major problem which faces micro-analytic research is reactivity. Each interview constitutes an artificial stimulus which is added to the stimuli which occur in a natural setting and it interacts with these stimuli. A respondent who is asked at monthly intervals how he feels about candidates One and Two, or about the welfare system and foreign aid, is apt to pay more attention to these matters because his interest has been aroused and because he expects repeat questions in the future.

My own research, which has involved weekly contacts with respondents, has shown that the problem is not quite as serious at it seems on its face. Time constraints and long-standing learning habits keep respondents from expending much extra effort to expose themselves to information or to learn it. In fact,

most respondents' exposure and learning patterns appear to be a fairly inflexible part of their daily routines so that the reactivity problem drops sharply after the initial interviews. Still, the problem is real and worrisome. I have attempted to assess its magnitude by using control groups who are subjected to the last series of questions only, or the first and the last. A comparison of the control groups and the multiple interview groups yields data on possible effects of repeated interviewing. This helps control the problem, but does not fully solve it.

What sorts of questions measure knowledge which can become a base line for assessing learning in a campaign? For micro-analytic research, one can approach the problem in several different ways. One can ask a sample of respondents what types of information they would like to obtain during a campaign and what kinds of information they are generally able to gather. One can then probe the pre-campaign level of knowledge and attitudes in the areas which they have mentioned and one can monitor their actual information intake in the pre-campaign and campaign period. Another approach which can be combined with the previous one, is a study of the information supply which is generally available through the mass media for political learning during a campaign.[13] Still another source are open-ended questions asked in prior surveys which have elicited information about the factors that influenced a respondents's voting decision.

Judging from previous investigations which used these methods, the average citizen wants to discover the candidates' stands on a very limited number of highly prominent issues, such as control of inflation and employment in 1974. He is interested in the candidates' personal qualities, such as honesty, integrity, and experience in a general rather than specific area. He is also interested in a number of social issues such as welfare and control of crime. Learning is likely

to take place in these areas because there is the drive to know, the ability to acquire information, and the reward of useful knowledge.

In the micro-analytic setting, questions can be asked about individual perceptions in an open-ended manner which allows the respondent to formulate the dimensions and implications of political problems as he sees them, rather than as the investigator has specified them. There is opportunity for the respondent to discuss politically relevant perceptions which may have been ignored or totally overlooked by the investigator.[14] In my own work, I have asked respondents about the reasons for their opinions and the sources from which they obtained information about the matter in question. Interview data have been supplemented by diaries in which respondents note information exposure, including a brief statement of the important points of the story, the source of the story, the respondent's reaction to the story, his reasons for paying attention to it, and his estimate of how long he will remember it.

Additionally, I have compiled weekly summaries of major news stories which include all stories which have received prominent mention by local mass media during the week. The respondent is asked if these stories have come to his attention. If he has missed a particular story, he is asked if avoidance was intentional and if so, why. If he noticed a story, he is asked for salient details and his reaction to the story. In this manner, information intake is carefully monitored on a personal basis. Many of the errors are eliminated which arise when respondents are asked to recall events and their reactions to them weeks and months after the event. I have also compared the total supply of mass media information to which the respondent exposed himself when he read a paper or watched a television program with the portion of information to which he actually paid attention and which he remembered. Such comparisons yield

important insights into individual information search and learning patters.

Turning to knowledge base-line questions in macro-analytic studies, we find that quite a few useful questions have been asked in the past. Unfortunately, few of them are usable for gauging learning during the campaign. The reason is that many of these questions have been asked in post-campaign interviews, with not even a probe about whether or not the respondent's perceptions were influenced by the campaign. When questions are asked before the election, they rarely involve several pre-campaign interviews with appropriate intervals to measure learning.

More seriously, respondents are not ordinarly asked the reasons for their opinions in a manner which would permit assessment of the influence of campaign stimuli. An exception in the 1972 Michigan survey are follow-up questions on predictions about financial developments and about the housing market which asked respondents for reasons for their predictions,[15] and a series of specific policy appraisal questions in 1974 which gave respondents a chance to give reasons for their appraisals. In neither case were sources of information requested. Nor are the campaign stimuli themselves usually measured to make it feasible to relate stimuli to responses.[16]

Various types of questions in the 1972 and 1974 Michigan Survey Research Center election studies would be useful for drawing a knowledge base line if they were at least asked at two points in time during the election and if the reasons for responses were requested. They are prediction questions, general and specific appraisal questions, and factual knowledge questions.

Prediction questions may concern the outcome of the election, the prospects for war, or the future state of the economy. "Who do you think will be elected President in November?" "Do you think it will be a close race?"[17] "Looking

ahead to the next 5 years, do you think that things in this country will get much better, somewhat better, somewhat worse, or much worse?"[18] are typical questions. A comparison of answers at an earlier and later date could lead to inferences about political learning if reasons were probed and campaign stimuli assessed. Moreover, the typically vague response categories need to be refined to be useful for accurate measurement. What does it mean that conditions will get "much better" or "somewhat better" or that a respondent cares about an event "a good deal" or "not very much" or that a citizen follows public affairs "most of the time," "some of the time" "only now and then" or "hardly at all?" Without some indication of what these definitions mean to each respondent, the answers are not very meaningful, particularly when they are aggregated and reported as group sentiments. They also suffer from the constraints which spring from forcing respondents to limit their repertoire of answers to a few choices.

General Appraisal questions ask respondents about their views of the world and their philosophies. Questions about the causes of individual success and failure, the causes of war and poverty, the power of citizens to influence their governments, the honesty of public officials, the right of blacks to live where they please are typical. Specific appraisal questions may ask respondents, in an open-ended or structured answer format, what they like or dislike about the candidates and parties, what they consider to be serious national problems, what they judge to be the comparative abilities of candidates and parties to cope with specified problems, the wisdom of specific policies or the job performance of various branches of the government. Answers can reveal the appraisal dimensions used by respondents for such judgments. For instance, they can disclose whether a

candidate is judged largely on the basis of personal qualities, on the basis of his experiences in public office, on his party affiliation, or on his promises of specific policies to be pursued after election. This, in turn, may provide clues to information-seeking practices and learning,[19] which could be investigated through appropriate time-series designs.

Regrettably, many of the replies elicited in open-ended appraisal questions by the Michigan surveys as well as other macro-analytic projects are vague and therefore do not lend themselves readily for measuring learning. For instance, during the first interview the respondent may state that he likes the policies of candidate One, or that candidate One is not a good man, or that he does not like the manner in which candidate Two campaigns. If he reverses himself during the second interview, one cannot link the reversal to specific campaign learning, unless one probes the reasons for the reversal. Preferably, the resons for the initial assessment should also be ascertained. Macro-analytic studies rarely have the resources in time and money to undertake these essential information quests.

Most of the factual knowledge questions asked in election surveys are useless for gauging political learning. In the 1972 Michigan survey, factual knowledge questions asked the length of the term of congressmen, whether the government of mainland China was democratic or Communist, and whether it was a member of the United Nations, whether most black civil rights action in the past had been peaceful, how prices and taxes had fluctuated during the previous year, and which party controlled Congress before and after the election. There are serious doubts whether ability to remember these types of facts, which may be of very low salience to the individual, is truly a test of his political knowledge and sophistication and a predictor

of the nature and quality of political learning one can expect of him. In my own research, many informants who were extremely well informed on a large number of political issues failed to answer such knowledge questions accurately. In fact, they frequently resented the questions as trivial schoolboy learning.

A second problem springs from the fact that the typical factual knowledge questions do not test matters which are likely to come to the fore during the campaign. For instance, there is little chance that a person who paid close attention to the 1972 campaign would have heard discussions of the length of congressional terms, or UN membership by Communist China. The types of knowledge questions which should be asked if insight into campaign learning is the goal are questions which test knowledge about matters apt to be discussed prominently during the campaign. This involves a bit of crystal ball gazing, but of a comparatively safe and easy type. The basic outlines of a campaign are not difficult to predict.

The Scope of Learning and Remembering

The investigator of campaign learning need not become enmeshed in debates about the precise point when fleeting attention becomes learning, and what length of recall constitutes "remembering." Since he is primarily interested in learning which affects behavior at a very specific point in time -- election day -- or which affects political beliefs and perceptions beyond the election date, he can operationalize the concepts of learning and remembering accordingly. Political stimuli have produced learning when the subject becomes aware of them so that he can recall the stimulus or the consequences of the stimulus, such as attitudes or moods, for a span of several hours or longer. For example, citizens had learned about Watergate when they could independently, or with a slight reminder, recall enough detail about

the affair to identify it unmistakably several hours after receiving information about the event. They had also learned about the prevalence of corruption in high places if they recalled in a general way that there had been recent stories about corruption incidents which had made them feel pessimistic about honesty levels in the federal government.

In my own work at the micro-analytic level, I have attempted to measure memory, with and without reminders, for variable periods ranging from several hours to a week to a year. I have asked for general recall of events during the campaign, and the reasons for remembering them, as well as for recall of specific stories through mention of identifying details. I have avoided general appraisal questions about whether or not policies were wise, events were good or bad for the country, or people acted properly or improperly, because respondents are often tempted to appraise unknown phenomena to avoid the stigma of ignorance. Of course, if appraisals are followed up by a request for specific reasons for the appraisal, the problem of faked knowledge becomes more manageable.

As mentioned earlier, the reactivity problem plagues all phases of memory research. Once a respondent's memory has been reinforced by a recall question, he is apt to remember the matter in question longer than he would without the reinforcement. The best approach, in a campaign learning study, seems to be to measure new knowledge acquisition and attitudinal learning through repeated tests during the campaign and save memory tests until election day or shortly thereafter.

By and large, macro-analytic studies have not concerned themselves much with testing specific learning from the campaign and with remembering. In panel studies, it has been assumed that changes in perceptions detected in before-and after-election panels and in multiple intra-campaign panels have been due to learning from the campaign.[21] Little effort has been made

to test the accuracy of this assumption. Memory has rarely been tested specifically, with the 1974 election being a possibly trend-setting exception. In 1974 the Michigan election survey asked respondents to recall what information had come to their attention during the campaign through the mass media and personal discussions, their perceptions of the fairness of campaign coverage by the media, and their perceptions of the emphasis which various candidates placed on issues during the campaign. The fact that this information was obtained in most cases after a post-election interval of several days or longer detracts somewhat from the value of the information for assessing campaign learning. The large number of respondents which must be reached makes it difficult to reduce this time interval substantially.

Macro-analytic studies have paid more attention to detecting motivation for campaign learning than to actual learning and remembering. It has been assumed that interested, concerned citizens, particularly those who feel that the outcome of the campaign will seriously affect their own lives, are likely to pay attention to the campaign, to learn from it, and to remember this learning. Questionnaires have therefore sought information about the degree of interest with which the respondent followed the campaign, his personal concern about the election outcome, his intent and eligibility to vote, his past voting behavior and family voting patterns, and his degree of participation in the campaign from wearing campaign buttons to canvassing voters. They have also inquired about the credibility of information sources and their fairness, as perceived by the respondent. The answers establish motivation for learning, but shed little light on actual learning.

Questionnaires have also sought information about opportunities for learning. Typical questions, usually asked after the campaign, relate to

the quantity of attention given to the media, attendance at political meetings and opportunities for political discussions. In the past, learning opportunity questions have rarely asked why the respondent exposed himself to certain information, how much attention he paid to it, what aspects he remembered, or the influence which these stimuli had on him, according to his own evaluation. The 1974 Michigan questionnaire again is representative of trends towards deeper probing, even in macro-analytic research. For instance, the survey asked respondents in 1974 why they read and watched campaign stories. Six answer options were provided. The survey also inquired about the kinds of stories which were read frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never, with special emphasis on campaign stories. It asked what people had read or watched on television shortly before election day concerning a national problem important to them. However, there was no probe about the effects which these learning stimuli might have had.

Another bank of questions infers learning and remembering potential from demographic information. Matters such as age, education, economic status, sex, race, and residence presumably influence the need for certain information and therefore the learning and remembering processes. So do childhood and adult family settings, occupational settings, friendship patterns, and group affiliations, including political party alignments. While many of these inferences appear to be sound on the basis of our very limited data about political learning, they all require further verification. Frequently, the democraphic characteristic or the social setting may not be directly responsible for learning patterns at all. Rather, the settings may produce the conditions which influence learning patterns. For instance, in my samples, the length and distribution of leisure time hours seems to be a cardinal factor influencing exposure to the campaign and the quality of learning of political information. And leisure time

patterns are very directly related to demographic factors and social settings.

Micro-analytic procedures can evaluate the interrelationships among various factors which affect learning and remembering far more readily than macro-analytic techniques. They are particularly useful in exploring the effects of various social settings through tape-recorded conversations, direct observations, and various types of projective tests. Macro-analytic research could do some of these things as well. But the costs are too high. The designers of large surveys cannot go very much farther in refining their instruments without jeopardizing their major objectives -- wide, representative coverage producing readily codable information at costs which foundations and governmental agencies are willing to underwrite.

When Do Campaigns Start?

The researcher interested in measuring campaign learning must know at what point in time his knowledge base-line should be established to separate pre-campaign learning from campaign learning. Most major surveys, like the Michigan survey, have begun their pre-election interviewing for presidential elections in September or October, usually with a simple before-and-after design which fails to establish a knowledge base-line for pre-election learning. A few surveys have begun one of several pre-election waves as early as June of the election year. A number of social scientists blame these late starting dates for the confounding findings of minimal impact of the campaign.

On an average, roughly one-third of the electorate has made its voting decision prior to the conventions, another third decides during the conventions, leaving only one third to make its decisions during the formal campaign period following the conventions.[22] Irving Crespi, from his vantage point as a vice-president of the Gallup Organization, claimed that in 1972 "the significant events of the campaign all occurred prior to the beginning of the formal

campaign."[23] Students of politics have argued on the basis of such findings that the start of the campaign must be pegged at a much earlier time than the summer or fall of the election year.[24]

Cost factors make it well-nigh impossible for large surveys to schedule multiple waves of extensive interviews with the same respondents during the pre-convention period. The lower cost micro-analytic techniques can afford to sample earlier, more frequently and in greater depth. The closer ties developed between interviewer and respondent in the more open-ended in-depth interviews which are used in micro-analytic work help in getting a high rate of repeat interviews. The drop-out rate in larger, more impersonal studies is far higher, particularly when interviews are lengthy.

While it seems clear that interviewing for campaign learning should reach further back in time than is common current practice, we do not know the precise time when investigations should begin if they are to yield the most accurate results. This is a question that should be tested by micro-analytic studies. In my own work involving presidential campaigns, I have experimented with interviews beginning a month prior to presidential primaries. But this may already be too late. During experimental testing in January, 1975, some respondents were already assessing the comparative merits of potential and declared candidates for the 1976 election, nearly two years hence.

A related question concerns the identification of "campaign" information to distinguish it from non-campaign news. The easiest, though not necessarily most desirable approach is to consider all information available to respondents during the period labelled as "the campaign" as campaign information. This approach, which has been widely used in voting studies of all types, makes it impossible to gauge the effects of campaign activities, narrowly

defined, from the effects of the ordinary flow of political events. But formulating and operationalizing a narrower definition poses serious problems, particularly when one of the candidates is an incumbent president. Should national and international news by which a president's performance is likely to be judged, be called "campaign" information, even if the candidates and media commentators do not link it directly to the campaign? If the answer is 'yes,' how does one identify information which is considered as an indicator of presidential performance, and information which is not likely to be linked directly to the president? The answers are difficult and must of necessity remain fairly arbitrary until we know more about campaign learning.

Measuring the Effects of Campaign Learning

More has been written about the effects of campaigns on voter attitudes than on any other aspect of campaigning.[25] Overall judgments have ranged from the so-called law of minimal consequences, according to which campaigning makes very little impact on citizens, to more recent findings which indicate that citizens are made aware of salient political topics through the campaign and learn a good deal about them. Scholars who believe that campaigns are influential claim that campaign learning is used to reach or reinforce voting decisions or alter previous decisions, or to produce political perceptions quite aside from voting decisions. Studies about campaign learning at the macro- and micro-level should be able to tell us whether campaign effects are minimal or sizeable at all times, or in certain cases only, and what impact these effects have on political learning, attitudes, feelings, and voting decisions. Hitherto they have failed to do so.

Micro-analytic studies have not yet tackled the task. Macro-analytic studies have skirted the problem while seeming to deal with it. They have failed to measure learning as a process. For the most

part, they have not measured changing attitudes and cognitions during the course of the campaign, nor the reasons for the political views and feelings which were gauged through questions or feeling thermometers in the pre- or post-campaign periods. They have not distinguished the effects of general political conditions, such as a depressed economy or involvement in war, from the effects of campaign references to these issues, or from the effects of other aspects of the campaign. They have looked for a limited number of specific effects, such as vote change or opinions conforming to themes and opinions prevalent in the mass media. But they have not probed actual learning from the combination of actual stimuli which reach the citizen.[26]

This does not mean that macro-analytic studies are inherently incapable of measuring political learning. It does mean, as I have tried to show, that they are not particularly well suited to the task. Like national opinion polls, their forte lies in producing a wide range of standardizable data about voting behavior, political opinions, and attitudes towards the political system for a sample which represents the demographic characteristics of the nation. They can record stages in the change process, but are ill-suited to analyze the process as such.

This is the point at which micro-analytic studies must take over. That they have failed to do so in the past is due in part to the strong pull of research fashions. The collection of opinion samples from large, randomly chosen populations has been the fashionable approach to measuring beliefs; it has monopolized the coveted label "scientific."

The major deterrent to micro-analytic work has been the bugaboo that such studies cannot be readily generalized to a national population and that they are therefore insignificant and do not yield scientifically acceptable generalizable findings. Critics of Robert Lane's work ask: What generalizations about political behavior can come from studying 15 men intensively?

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What confidence can one have that their behavior is typical? These are legitimate questions. But the answer is not as negative as worshippers on the altar of large random samples would have it.

Samples drawn for micro-analytic research can be representative of behavioral types which have been identified through social-scientific methods. Various identification techniques used in the past, such as Q-methodology, semantic differential groupings, or even the findings from large sample surveys, have yielded manageable numbers of behavior types.[27] To use an oversimplified example: if one can type heavy or light or intermediate drinkers and ascertain their shared psychological or sociological traits, one can do the same for people consuming media information. For instance, one can construct samples representing heavy, medium, and light media users, or people with varying degrees of need for media information and ascertain characteristics common to each sub-group. Small samples, selected to represent learning behavior types can then be used to establish norms for these types. These norms, in turn, give insight into the behavior of subjects matching particular learning types. To make statements about the behavior of larger populations, one merely needs to identify as full a range of behavior types as feasible and then ascertain how these behavior types are distributed in a given population.

But even if one is skeptical about typing learning behavior and using small samples to discover behavioral norms, one cannot fail to acknowledge the superiority of micro-analytic techniques for studying complex learning processes. Given present knowledge and resources, the option of studying learning processes intensively in large samples does not exist. The ideal research procedure may be a marriage of macro- and micro-analytic techniques with micro-techniques taking over where macro-techniques leave off. If we limit our research strategies to macro-analytic methods only, we will con-

tinue to accumulate information about knowledge and opinions at static points in time. But we will not discover how learning as a process takes place in individuals to produce cognitions, attitudes and dispositions which, in turn, yield political beliefs and actions during a campaign, as well as other times.

Footnotes

1. The fact that campaigns obviously are important, despite research findings which fail to turn up much evidence, is discussed by Walter Berns, "Voting Studies," pp. 3-62 in Herbert J. Storing, ed., Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p. 17.

2. Robert E. Lane, Political Ideology: Why the American Common Man Believes What He Does. New York: The Free Press, 1967, pp. 481-497.

3. A general discussion of human learning is presented in ch. 3 of Neal E. Miller and John Dollard, Personality and Psychotherapy: An Analysis in Terms of Learning, Thinking, and Culture. New York: McGraw Hill, 1950. Also see Neal E. Miller and John Dollard, Social Learning and Imitation. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941, particularly the first three chapters.

4. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice, 2d ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948; Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954. A number of elements of these studies have been incorporated into a replication conducted during the 1972 election in Syracuse, New York, by Thomas E. Patterson and Robert D. McClure.

5. Jay G. Blumler and Denis McQuail, Television in Politics: Its Uses and Influence. London: Faber & Faber, 1968.

6. An overall perspective on these studies, as well as a number of small-sample projects, is provided by Elihu Katz and Jacob J. Feldman, "The Debates in the Light of Research: A Survey of Surveys," pp. 173-223 in Sidney Kraus, editor, The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1968.

7. Examples are Roberta S. Sigel, "Effect of Partisanship on the Perception of Political Candidates," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 28, 1964, pp. 483-495; Steven H. Chaffee, L. Scott Ward, and Leonard P. Tipton, "Mass Communication and Political Socialization," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 47, 1970, pp. 647-659, 666.

8. In addition to Political Ideology, cited in note 2 above, other works by Robert Lane are helpful, particularly Political Thinking and Consciousness: The Private Life of the Political Mind. Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1969.

9. Many of them are summarized in Fred I. Greenstein, Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization. Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1969. A most interesting recent study of a small sample of legislators is Robert D. Putnam, The Beliefs of Politicians: Ideology, Conflict, and Democracy in Britain and Italy. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

10. Center for Political Studies, the University of Michigan, "The CPS 1972 American National Election Study," Code book pp. ii, iv. Ann Arbor,

Michigan: Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, 1973.

11. For an example, see John H. Kessel, The Goldwater Coalition: Republican Strategies in 1964. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1968, pp. 271-297.

12. Examples are ongoing work by Maxwell McCombs based on surveys in Charlotte, North Carolina and election effects analyses by Thomas E. Patterson and Robert D. McClure, based on surveys in Syracuse, New York.

13. Recent studies of campaign information supply include Doris A. Graber, "The Press as Opinion Resource During the 1968 Presidential Campaign," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 35, 1971, pp. 168-182, and Doris A. Graber, "Press Coverage Patterns of Campaign News: The 1968 Presidential Race," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 48, 1971, pp. 502-512. Mass Media Coverage of the 1972 campaign has been studied by a number of investigators, including the present author. Probably the most complete analysis was undertaken at the Polimetrics Laboratory of Ohio State University under the guidance of C. Richard Hofstetter. For 1974 campaign coverage, content analyses at the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan will become available. They are being prepared under the direction of Warren E. Miller, F. Gerald Kline, and Arthur H. Miller.

14. Richard A. Brody and Benjamin I. Page, "Comment: The Assessment of Policy Voting," American Political Science Review, Vol. 66, 1972, pp. 450-458, contains an interesting discussion on the differential effects of various stimuli. See particularly pp. 457-458.

15. "Codebook," cited in note 10, pp. 302, 319.

16. Among the few published studies which probe the sources from which information came are Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton, cited in note 7, and Neil Hollander, "Adolescents and the War: the Sources of Socialization," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 48, 1971, pp. 472-479.

17. "Codebook," cited in note 10, pp. 13-14.

18. Ibid., p. 56.

19. Doris A. Graber, "Press Coverage and Voter Reaction in the 1968 Presidential Election," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 89, 1974, pp. 68-100.

20. For an example of observing forgetting during a six months interval, see Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton, cited in note 7, p. 653.

21. See the studies cited in notes 5 and 6 above.

22. William H. Flanigan, Political Behavior of the American Electorate. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968, pp. 98-99.

23. Paper presented to the Syracuse University Conference on Mass Media and American Politics, November 16, 1972, p. 14.

24. The argument has been made particularly well by Kurt and Gladys E. Lang, in

Politics and Television. Chicago: Quadrangle Press, 1968.

25. This literature is too voluminous to be cited here. As a starter, the reader may want to consult Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication. New York: The Free Press, 1960, Walter Weiss, "Effects of the Mass Media of Communication," pp. 77-195 in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, eds., The Handbook of Social Psychology, (2nd ed.), Vol. 5. Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1969, and footnote 1 in John Kessel, "Comment: The Issues in Issue Voting," American Political Science Review, Vol. 66, 1972, pp. 459-465.

26. How different approaches to the measurement problem may yield quite different results is demonstrated in Gerald M. Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968," American Political Science Review, Vol. 66, 1972, pp. 415-428.

27. Underlying principles of behavior typing are explained in Cyril Burt, The Factors of the Mind, London: University of London Press, 1940; and William Stephenson, The Study of Behavior: Q-Technique and Its Methodology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.